

Merrick Blvd Bus Lanes

NYC DOT | Better Buses Restart | August 2020

Merrick Blvd, Queens



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Better Buses Restart

Better Buses Restart

Better Buses Program

- **Mayor's 2019 State of the City:**
Improve bus speeds 25%
- **Better Buses Action Plan**
Released April 2019
- **Bus Priority Projects**
 - 22 projects implemented in 2019
 - 24 projects were planned for 2020, heavy focus on coordination with NYCT Bronx Bus Network Redesign

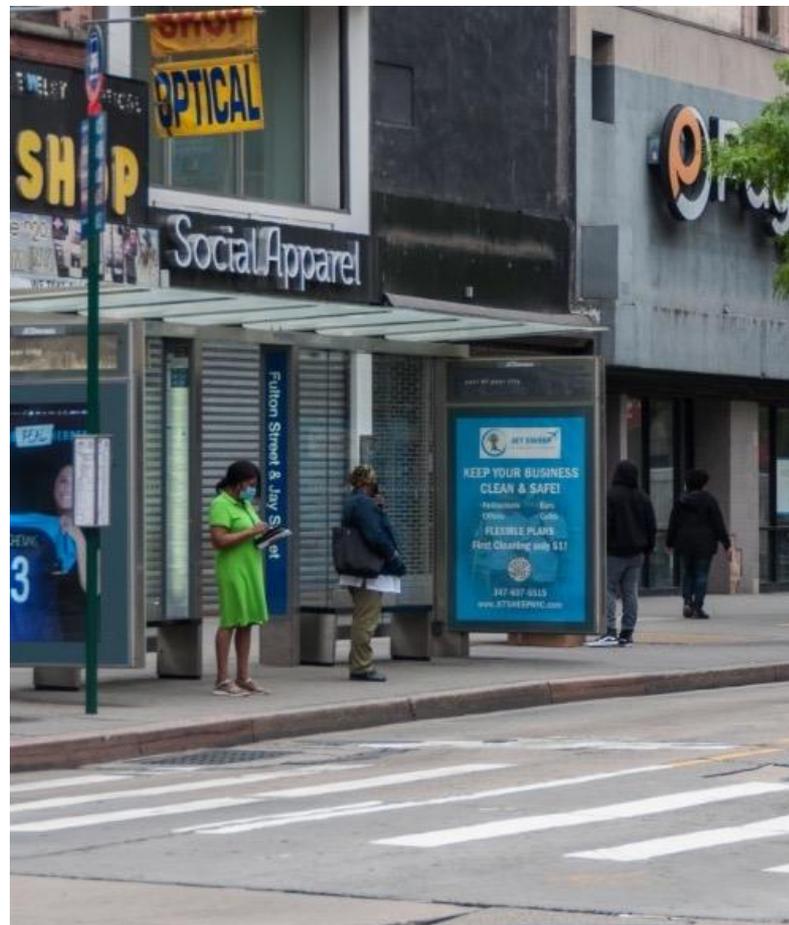


Better Buses Restart

Impact of COVID-19

2020 Work Program was disrupted by the pandemic

- Limited ability to conduct data collection and outreach starting in March
- Bronx Redesign implementation postponed



Better Buses Restart

Bus Service During the Pandemic

- **Speeds initially increased by over 20%**
- **Ridership initially decreased about 70%**
- **Highlighted areas of particular need**
 - Essential workers using transit
 - Underrepresented communities hardest hit by virus
- **Good bus service needed for restart**
 - Support essential workers
 - Attract people back to transit

NYC Reopening

Phase 1

- **June 8**
- Approx. 300k workers returned
- Construction, manufacturing, some retail

Phase 2

- **June 22**
- More retail
- Outdoor dining
- Some office

Phase 3

- **July 6**
- Personal care services, some outdoor recreation, no indoor dining

Phase 4

- **July 20**
- Schools, entertainment
- No indoor dining

Better Buses Restart

Why New York Buses Are on the Rise in a Subway City

During the coronavirus pandemic, daily ridership on buses has surpassed the subway for the first time in over half a century.



Coronavirus Updates: Bus And Subway Riders Jump By More Than 213,000 On First Day Of Reopening

BY ELIZABETH KIM

JUNE 9, 2020 1:50 P.M. • [39 COMMENTS](#)

Buses more popular than the subway in NYC during coronavirus crisis

By David Meyer

May 20, 2020 | 7:15pm

Carmageddon' if returning workers avoid mass transit

"Traffic could come to a standstill."

By Gio Benitez and Mina Kaji

June 15, 2020, 12:12 PM • 5 min read

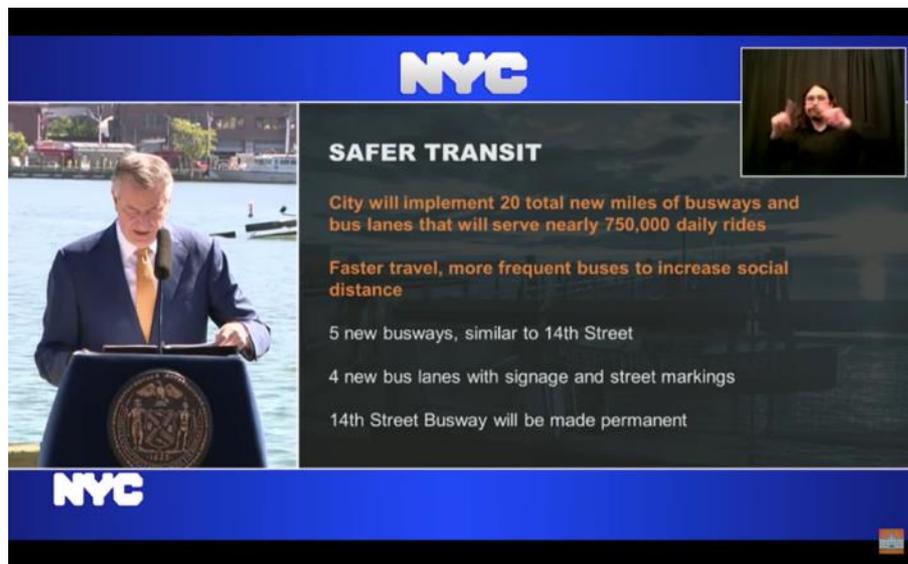


Better Buses Restart

Recovery Plan

In June, Mayor de Blasio announced a plan for fast, reliable transit service during reopening

- Buses played a vital role during the shutdown and continue to during recovery
- Bus ridership is already at 56% of pre-COVID levels, while subway ridership is only at 21%



The screenshot shows a video presentation with a blue header and footer, both featuring the 'NYC' logo. On the left, Mayor de Blasio is speaking at a podium with the NYC seal. On the right, a text box titled 'SAFER TRANSIT' lists the following details:

- City will implement 20 total new miles of busways and bus lanes that will serve nearly 750,000 daily rides
- Faster travel, more frequent buses to increase social distance
- 5 new busways, similar to 14th Street
- 4 new bus lanes with signage and street markings
- 14th Street Busway will be made permanent

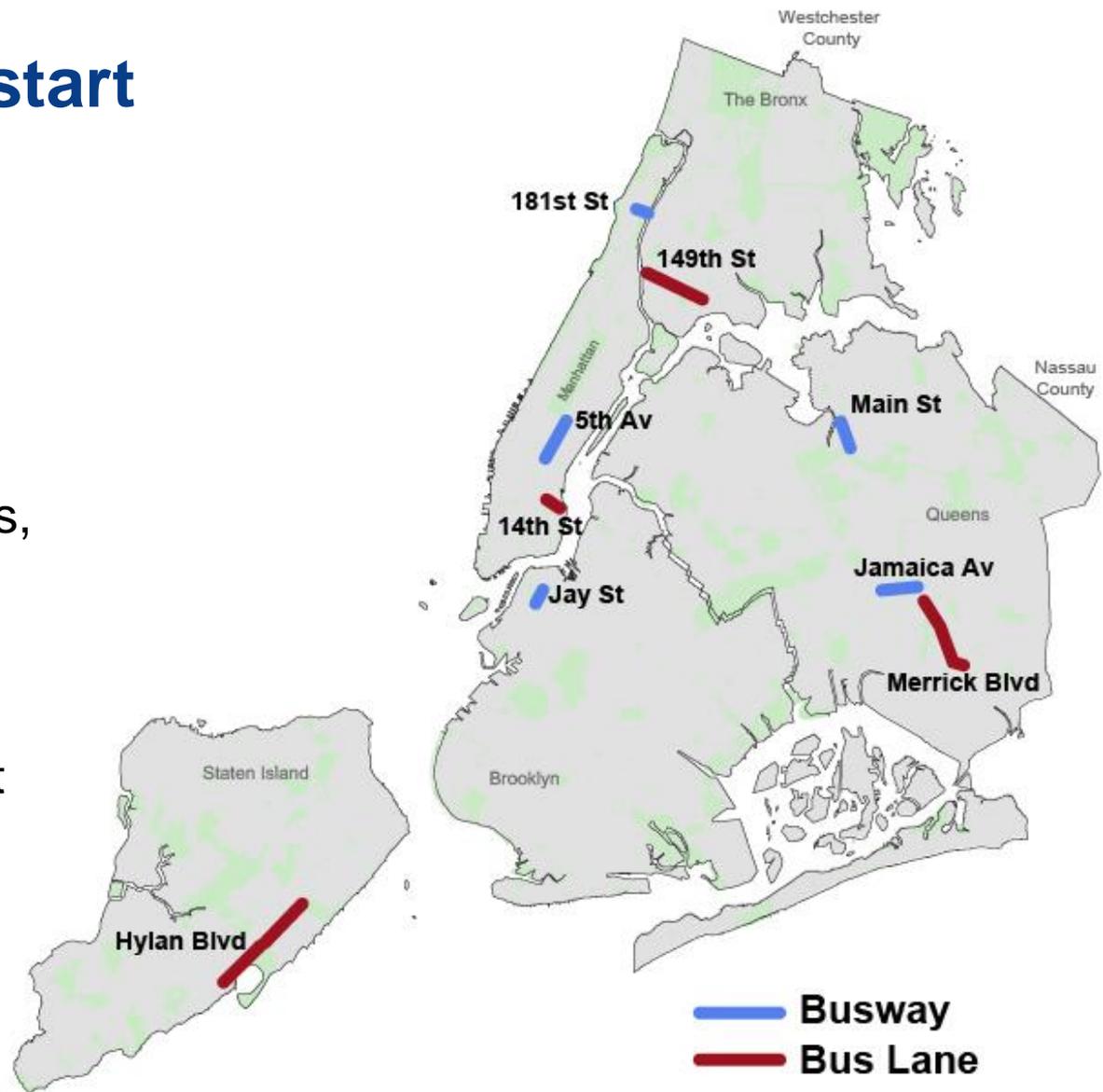
A small inset video in the top right corner shows a person in a dark room.

Better Buses Restart

Recovery Plan

9 busway & bus lane projects announced, focused on:

- Vulnerable populations, essential workers
- Number of bus passengers served
- Potential to implement quickly
- Geographic equity

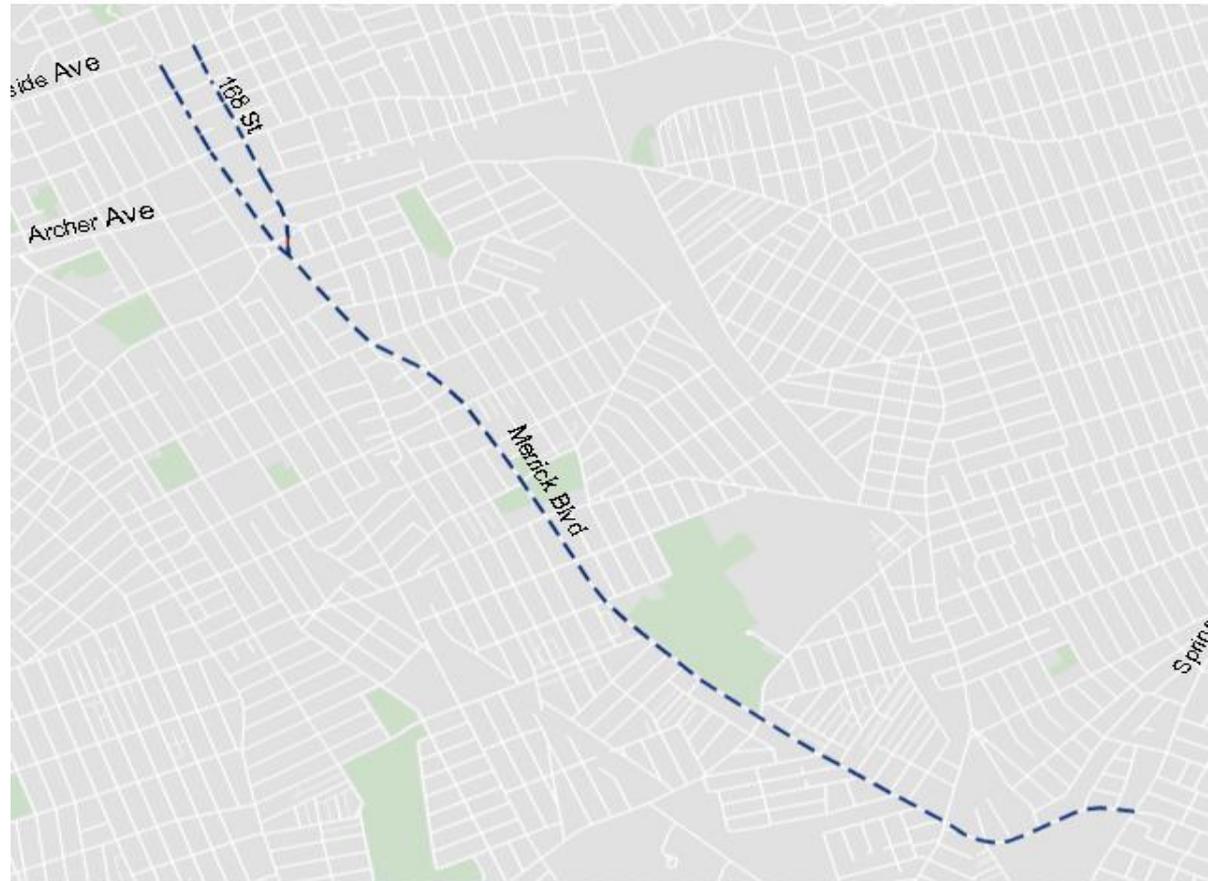


Merrick Blvd

Background

Background

- Examining Merrick Blvd and 168 St between Hillside Ave and Springfield Blvd
- 3.2 mile, mostly commercial corridor
- Served by Q4, Q5, Q84, Q85, X63, N4 and N4X routes south of Archer Ave
- Many more routes circulate on Merrick/168 St north of Archer Ave
- Provides critical subway connections to E, F, J and Z subway lines
- Identified as a bus priority corridor during Queens Bus Network Redesign



Merrick Boulevard/168th Street Characteristics

- Merrick and 168th St function as one-way pair north of Liberty Ave
 - Both streets will be explored for bus lanes between Hillside Ave and Liberty Ave
- Dozens of bus routes on both streets in the core of Jamaica
- Wide right-of-way south of Liberty Ave
- Curbside bus lane proposed for Merrick Blvd in mid-2000s, but DOT toolbox has been refined since then



Recent DOT Projects

2017 Vision Zero Project

Merrick Blvd from Hillside Ave to Hook Creek Blvd

- Extended median tips and improved markings
- Added pedestrian crossings

2019 Transit Signal Priority

Archer Ave & 160th St to Merrick Blvd & Farmers Blvd

- Studied 30 intersections
- An estimated 2%-6% faster service



Bus Speeds

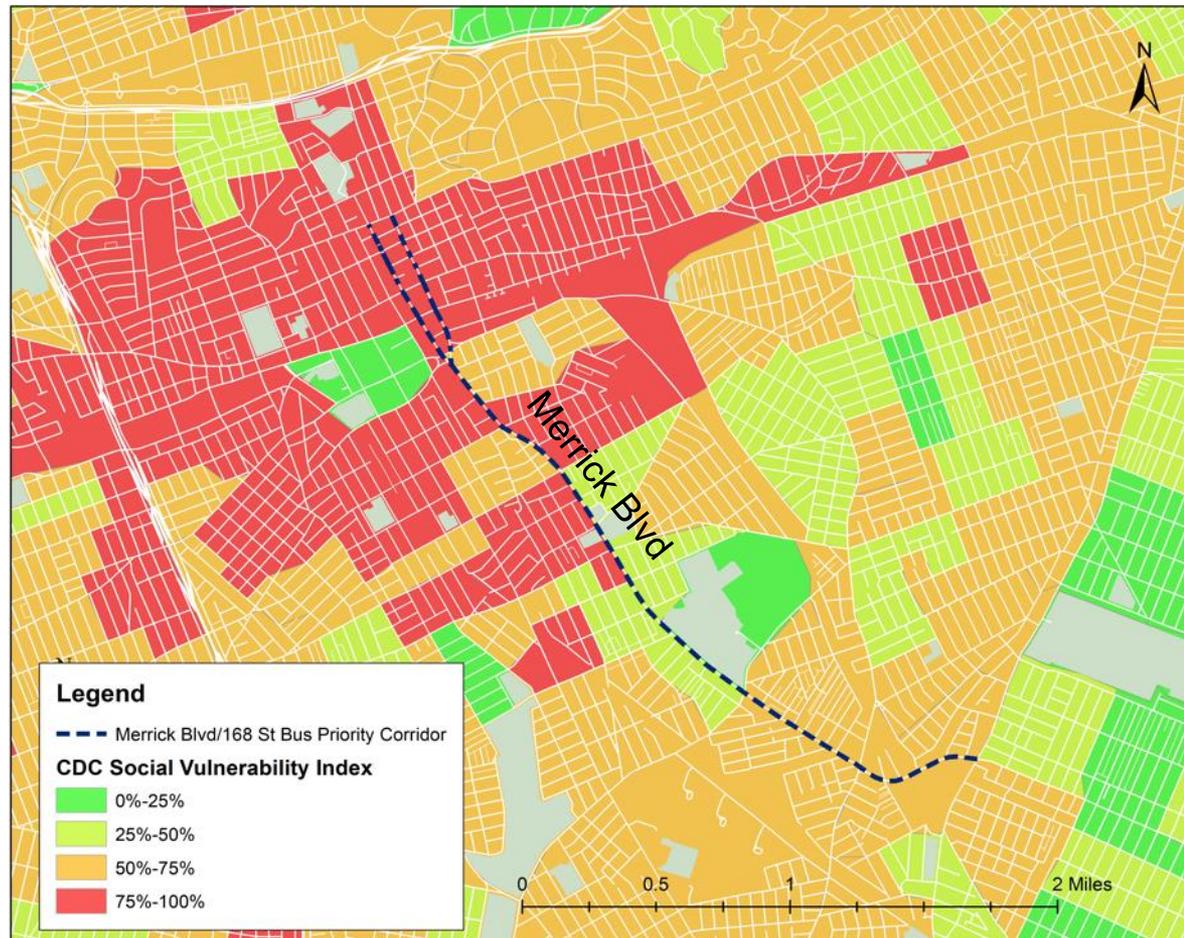
- Overnight bus speeds are essentially buses in “free flow” traffic conditions
- Overnight bus speeds are 20%-47% faster than peak hour travel speeds
- Merrick Blvd bus lane project aims to get bus riders out of traffic and closer to “free flow” trips

Current Bus Speeds (mph)

	AM Peak	PM Peak	Overnight
Westbound	10.5	9.7	12.6
Eastbound	10	9.3	13.6

Social Vulnerability Index

- Passes through areas that scored highly on the CDC's Social Vulnerability Index
- SVI describes community resiliency to stresses on human health like disease outbreaks



Community Concerns

What we've heard already

General state of good repair

- Pavement conditions

Need for further safety upgrades

- Illegal U-turns across median near Hendrickson Pl

Need for better curb management

- Placard abuse in downtown Jamaica
- Double parking
- Parking on sidewalk

Merrick Blvd Proposed Project

DOT Toolkit to Improve Bus Service

Curbside Bus Lanes



© NYC DOT

Offset Bus Lanes



© NYC DOT

Turn Bays



Curb Management



© NYC

DOT Toolkit to Improve Bus Service

Bus Lanes

- Potential bus lanes on Merrick Blvd and 168th St would increase speed and reliability of bus service
- Benefits high number of bus riders traveling through the corridor as the City continues with reopening efforts
- Would eventually be camera enforced

Turn Bays

- Right turn bays at selected intersections would separate buses from right turning traffic, benefiting both



DOT Toolkit to Improve Bus Service

Curb Management

Existing

- Alternate Side Parking south of Liberty
- No Standing/No Parking areas north of Archer Av

Potential Reg Updates

- Commercial loading zones
- Additional metered parking to encourage turnover



Improved Bus Stop Spacing

- Better, more consistent stop spacing can improve speed and reliability
- Adjusting stop location at critical intersections can improve reliability, traffic flow



Next Steps

Next Steps

- Additional Community Advisory Board (CAB) meetings
- Next CAB meeting – mid August
- Complete corridor analysis
- Draft bus lane design

Thank You!

Questions?



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